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Mennonite pastor gets unexpected chance to counsel B.C. premier

James Kwantes

VICTORIA, B.C. — Many evangelical Christians in the province of B.C. view Premier Glen Clark as an enemy to Christian values and sensibilities. His NDP government has passed a bill changing the definition of "spouse" to include homosexual couples, promoted a public school curriculum that seeks to normalize homosexuality, and expanded gambling, among other initiatives opposed by Christians.

But at a July meeting of 30 B.C. religious leaders Clark initiated in Victoria, an Abbotsford Mennonite pastor named Vern Heidebrecht had the unique opportunity to counsel Clark and express his policy concerns in a one-on-one conversation with B.C.'s leader.

Heidebrecht hopes the meet-



COURTESY JAMES KWANTES
Vern Heidebrecht

ing was more than just a public relations exercise and that it will sow the seeds for a better dialogue between B.C.'s Chris-

tian community and the Premier's office.

"Only time will tell whether it was political grandstanding or something real," he said. "I like to think he was sincere."

Heidebrecht is a senior pastor at Northview Community Church, a fast-growing Mennonite Brethren church which attracts an estimated 3,500 to 4,500 people to weekend worship services.

Hitching a ride

His fortuitous encounter with Clark came after the meeting, when members of the media asked the premier if any of the religious leaders had shown original thinking or leadership. Clark pointed at Heidebrecht and advised reporters he might be worth interviewing.

Heidebrecht said he was

"cornered" by the media in the halls of the B.C. Legislature and obliged their requests for short interviews — but when he looked up several minutes later, the other leaders had already left in taxis for a luncheon.

The minister made his way up to the premier's office, where he bumped into Clark and an aide. The premier volunteered to drive Heidebrecht to the luncheon. And as the threesome travelled to lunch and ate together, Heidebrecht brought up some concerns he had with government policy and took the rare opportunity to counsel Clark.

"I encouraged him on his journey to find some spiritual roots," said Heidebrecht of Clark, who grew up attending Catholic school but describes himself as "not very religious."



Premier Glen Clark

"No matter how secular you are, you need to have some sort of spiritual roots," noted Heidebrecht.

He refused to discuss that part of his conversation with Clark that touched on the B.C. leader's spirituality, saying to do so

See PASTOR page 2...

Gypsy influx no different than others

Alan Doerksen

TORONTO — Michelle Bell, who works with Toronto's Woodgreen Red Door Shelter, says Canadians need not worry about the sudden wave of Gypsy refugee claimants from the Czech Republic. Several hundred Gypsies have arrived in the past few months, and some Canadians have reacted with concern and even animosity.

Many attribute the influx of Gypsies to a TV program broadcast recently in the Czech Republic which portrayed Canada as an ideal place to which refugees could move.

But Bell notes, "One time, exactly the same thing happened in Israel [and] there was a huge flood of Russian Jews" into Canada as a result. At other times, there have been sudden influxes of refugees from countries such as Somalia, she

adds.

Woodgreen Red Door Shelter currently houses 45 Gypsies. It is supported by the United

Church. The shelter provides Gypsies and other refugees with basic needs such as food, and orientation to the Toronto area.



Hungarian Gypsies share a meal.

Although the shelter now houses mostly Gypsy refugees, in the past it has housed various ethnic groups, often mostly from one country, explains Bell.

Use same policy

She believes the government should not try to stop Gypsies from immigrating to Canada. "I think [the government] should have the same policy for them as for everyone else."

Bell notes that her centre has been inundated recently by media inquiries because it is sheltering Gypsies.

The Family Shelter, a temporary housing centre for homeless people and refugees operated by Metro Toronto, has also been hosting Gypsy refugees recently. Leslie Jardine, manager of the shelter, says that since last December, Gypsies from the Czech Republic have been staying at the shelter. Most arrived in July and August of this year.

The shelter provides housing, a food allowance, counselling and advice on legal and welfare issues. The staff work closely with settlement agencies in

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News

Pastor shares concerns with B.C. premier

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would betray the trust Clark placed on him.

"If he's going to be honest with me, then some of the stuff will be personal," said the pastor, who downplayed his meeting with the premier, but from all accounts made the most of his unexpected opportunity to talk with Clark.

Heidebrecht said he brought up several political issues with Clark in his encounter, including concerns about same-sex spousal recognition, expanded gambling, union favoritism, and the negative effect high taxes and excessive regulation are having on B.C. investment and business.

Surprised by red tape

Earlier, Heidebrecht had told Clark of the hurdles and red tape the church he pastors had faced when trying to help troubled women by building a shelter.

In Clark's earlier address to the religious leaders, the premier

told them that 7,000 children in the province are wards of the state at any given time, and that reading anecdotal stories of the pain and abuse some of those children suffer "brings tears to his eyes."

Noting the financial limits government faces in the daunting task of fighting such poverty, Clark appealed for the help of the leaders and their churches to combat unemployment and poverty and to promote child welfare.

But Heidebrecht said Clark appeared "surprised" to hear about the roadblocks Abbotsford's Northview Community Church faced in the early 1990s when it tried to open a battered women's shelter. The church had a plan to develop the project with minimal provincial help, because many in the church believed Christian activism involves social action.

"We tried to open a home for battered women, and it was nixed because we are a religious

organization," he noted. "I told him, 'there are road blockages you might not even be aware of.'"

He said he told Clark that churches already perform much good work in B.C. communities and it's in the government's best interests to facilitate that work.

"The church is salt in the community. Take the salt out, and the community goes dead, or there's a big breakdown," Heidebrecht said. "Government would be wise to work alongside that strength. It makes sense if government would open up doors to make it easier for (churches)."

He said Clark promised to look into Northview's negotiations with the B.C. government on the planned women's shelter and investigate why they had collapsed on the government side.

Differences no barrier

Heidebrecht said the ideological gulf between himself and

Clark did not prove a barrier to a frank and open discussion.

"He knows I'm in a political stance that is contrary to his, but I respect him for being an individual ordained of God to be in government," said Heidebrecht, who described Clark as "personable, highly interested and very sharp."

"Just because we have political differences doesn't mean we can't minister to people," he noted.

As for the relationship between church and state, Heidebrecht opined that churches must tread carefully when getting involved in political matters.

"The church should not use political pressure to change the community, but be the salt, light and servants of the community," he said. "There are times when the church should suffer to take a stand. Other times, the church should engage in conversation and communicate values, convictions and ability to serve."

He said St. Paul's actions in the Roman Empire could serve as a useful model to churches in society. Sometimes Paul used his Roman citizenship to protect himself from whipping, but other times, let himself be whipped.

Ironically, shortly before the session with the premier, Heidebrecht had finished reading *Just As I Am*, the recently published autobiography by influential American evangelist Billy Graham. He held up Graham as an example of the great impact Christians can have by keeping lines of communication open, even to those with whom they might personally disagree.

"(Graham) ministered to nine presidents of various political persuasions — and he took some criticism for it," said Heidebrecht. "We as Christians should take hold of the opportunities we have to minister to and encourage government officials."

Gypsies face discrimination in Czech Republic, Canada

... continued from page 1

Metro Toronto, which help find permanent housing. The Czechoslovak Association of Canada, based in Toronto, is now considering ways to assist the new refugees, says Jardine.

Asked if Gypsy refugees have continued their traditional nomadic lifestyle in Canada, Jardine says, "It's too early to tell." Like many new immigrants, the Gypsies have tended to come to major cities in Canada, especially Toronto, she says.

Jardine is uncomfortable with the media attention that has been focused on Gypsy refugees. "They're no different than any other refugee group," she says.

Jardine believes some persecution of Gypsies is going on in the Czech Republic. "I can only go by what the families are saying," she says. "For us, they're homeless and we provide assistance."

Discrimination here too

But Canada has not proven to be free of discrimination against Gypsies. In late August, skinheads protested in front of a shelter in Metro Toronto where Gypsies were staying. The skinheads insisted the Gypsies should "go back where they came from."

Anne Woolger, director of



Anne Woolger, director of Toronto Baptist Refugee Services

Toronto Baptist Refugee Services, believes that Canada needs to give each Gypsy refugee a fair hearing because this country "is party to the Geneva Convention on Refugees."

"If every Gypsy can prove [he or she] was discriminated against, we could receive a lot of them," says Woolger. But she observes that just because Gypsies have a right to immigrate to Canada as refugees doesn't mean that many will come. In other situations where a precedent has been set (for instance, that wives of abusive husbands can come to Canada as refugees), there has not been a subsequent flood of immigrants, she

says.

Currently, it is fairly easy for prospective refugees to come to Canada from the Czech Republic because Canada has lifted visa requirements for visitors from there. If the government wants to slow down immigration from the Czech Republic to Canada, it could ask for visas, Woolger says.

Woolger is concerned that Gypsy refugee claimants are already facing some discrimination in Canada, which is reflected in the extensive media coverage. There is "a growing xenophobia, sadly," she observes.

Stereotyping

Recently, the *Toronto Star* obtained information that showed immigration department staff were planning to delay Gypsy refugee claims for as long as three weeks while they made inquiries about possible criminal records. This drew a strong reaction from refugee advocates such as Sharry Aiken, president of the Canadian Council for Refugees, who said, "I find it extremely alarming to target one group like this when there is no evidence of serious criminality. It is really based on the worst kind of stereotyping and that is highly objectionable."



Ed Vandenberg, executive director of The Lighthouse

But Woolger says that running a criminal check on potential refugees is "actually a routine thing, if they're accepted at their interview."

Ed Vandenberg, executive director of The Lighthouse (a centre for refugees in Toronto run as a diaconal ministry of local Christian Reformed congregations), agrees that criminal background checks are standard procedure for refugee claimants. He believes this is important to do because Canada has "a history of accepting Nazi war criminals." But he acknowledges that information the immigration department gets from a refugee's country of origin

might be biased.

Vandenberg believes it's proper for Canada to have guidelines for accepting refugees. But refugees such as Gypsies "should be treated fairly and speedily." Otherwise, he warns the system could become "clogged."

Vandenberg says The Lighthouse has not yet dealt with any Gypsy refugees, but he expects some may become involved with the centre's English-language program in the future.

Vandenberg believes Gypsies in the Czech Republic are "no doubt suffering discrimination. Since the fall of Communism, there's been more persecution of these people.... There could well be grounds for refugee claims and they need to be heard."

But he asserts that Gypsies are also facing discrimination in Canada. There is some hostility between Toronto's (white) Czech community and the Gypsy community.

"Unfortunately, right now there is not too much tolerance for a new wave of refugees" in Canada, Vandenberg says. The TV program that portrayed Canada as a paradise for refugees gave Gypsies in the Czech Republic wrong information, he asserts.

Sports/Politics

After the Buzzer

00:00



Tim Antonides

Christian athletes: We're 'fearfully and wonderfully made'

It's fascinating. Their wallets spill over with cash. Depending on how they perform certain physical movements, they can move thousands of screaming people out of their seats or send them grumbling to the exits. Their lives (professional and personal) are scrutinized religiously. People love to see them succeed almost as much as they like to see them fail miserably. For many, they are the root cause of joy, misery, sports widowhood, and resentment (sometimes all in the same evening). Modern culture, and the media, in particular, have given professional athletes tremendous power and influence.

As a teacher, I get a front-row seat to the same show, but played out on a smaller stage and with somewhat less at stake financially. I'm amused by some of the middle school kids I have taught who are gifted athletically (some who don't even have peach fuzz yet). The cocky little parade through the hallways after a particularly successful outing is strangely funny. So, too, is the sight of some of their parents who bark instructions from the sidelines, hurl disapproval at a poor play, and commit verbal homicide on the ref. Yes, I say it's funny. I would laugh but I'm too disgusted.

Commercialism. Narcissism. Competitive sports. Bad, bad, bad. It's so liberating to dismiss a whole area of culture as unredeemable and move on to the next one, isn't it? Liberating but naive.

There's a question I want to raise. How has the Lord intended us to use athletic gifts? All gifts are to be used to advance the Kingdom. We know this as fact. How so athletic ones? Allow me to voice a couple of ideas.

Holy to the Lord

Horse bells and cooking pots can be holy to the Lord (Zech. 14:20) and, therefore, instruments of discipleship, depending on how we use them. Athletics can be, too. I think there are two crucial ways in which they can.

The most obvious way in which athletic gifts are redemptive, I think, is in the way they inspire awe and wonder in the physical capabilities of humankind as God's Creation. It's not hard to appreciate the beauty and grace of someone skating up the ice, splitting the defence, and putting the puck top shelf. Likewise, the complexity required to turn a double play is both beautiful and awesome. Such things are a celebration of physical gifts. Perhaps we may not consciously be aware of it, but I think we do marvel at God's handiwork when we see some of the things the human body can do.

There's another way in which athletic gifts are meant to be used as redemptive activity, however. In past columns I've focused on the distortions that exist in different levels of sports. Such distortions need change agents — athletes who, through their influence and exposure, can be positive witnesses of normativity in athletics. Michael Jordan shows a fair degree of class and style on the court. He is respected and honored for this (along with the fact that he's gifted with a basketball). Imagine the impact he would have if he showed humility, spiritual leadership and thankfulness to his Creator.

Schools (elementary and high school) could use athletes who praise God for their talent, who are humble, and who show love for opponents (while maintaining the tenacity that helps them succeed). Then we could start seeing athletic gifts being used the way the Lord intended.

Tim Antonides teaches Grade 5 and coaches basketball at Surrey Christian School, Surrey, B.C.

Requiem for an empire

Future history books will one day record that the British Empire took precisely 50 years to die. A process that began with the independence of India and Pakistan in August 1947 finally ended in July 1997 with the cession of Hong Kong to China. If India was the first jewel in the crown to be lost, Hong Kong was the last major outpost to be relinquished by London. Thus ended a venture that started half a millennium ago with the arrival of John Cabot on Newfoundland.

Current opinion does not look kindly on empires, and rightly so. Colossal hubris fuelled the colonial enterprise, as European statesmen and adventurers scrambled to conquer as much of the non-European world as possible. It is difficult for us now to fathom that even Christians, who might otherwise have understood better than others the deadly power of human vanity, could have thought that God's world would be better off centrally directed from London, Paris or Berlin.

Leaving crises in their wake

As it successively assembled and vacated its empire, Britain left behind a string of intractable crises which have bedeviled world policymakers ever since. These include the lengthy Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Greek-Turkish stalemate on Cyprus, and the on-going bad blood between India and Pakistan. Far from easing troubles where they already existed, British policies often exacerbated them.

But neither has Britain's legacy been an unmixed liability for its former possessions. The territories once under its control have benefited both materially and culturally. Cyprus was a British possession for 82 years, and this influence still remains. The island has a more modern road system than Greece, its drivers are more courteous than their mainland Greek counterparts, and its government and civil service are more efficiently operated.

Even Cypriots themselves have the polite manners of their former rulers and tend to be put off by the bluntness of their mainland cousins.

The British left behind a political legacy as well. For example, modern federalism was



David T. Koyzis

largely the invention of British colonials trying to balance local and national interests by dividing political authority. The United States, Canada, Australia and India — though, ironically, not Britain itself — are all beneficiaries of this.

More significantly, Britain was one of the first Western countries to develop constitutional government and a strong tradition of protecting its citizens' rights. The Magna Carta, the Common Law and the Bill of Rights of 1689 have all left their mark, and we in the Anglo-Saxon countries are better off for it.

Of course, not all former British territories have availed themselves of this heritage. Too many countries in the Commonwealth of Nations routinely abuse human rights. Nigeria is a notable example. Concern for human rights is the principal reason Britain delayed so long returning Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China. Although Britain had unjustly seized Hong Kong in 1842, by the second half of the 20th century the colony had become the refuge of choice for hundreds of thousands fleeing the totalitarian regime next door.

If Britain neglected its duty in not adequately preparing Hong Kong's residents for self-government, it nevertheless protected their rights and allowed them to live and worship freely. Thus it was with mixed feelings that many residents saw their city finally handed over to Beijing.

Perhaps the people of Hong Kong will succeed in appropriating for themselves the best of Britain's cultural and political traditions. If so, they might, over the long term, be able to influence for good a regime with a proven track record of mistreating its own citizens.

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Editorial

How do landlords practice love for the poor?

I don't think I ever want to be a landlord. I have stood in for a landlord who had to be away for a year, but the experience is not something I value. The job of supervising a multi-apartment rental entails constant uncertainty about whether tenants pay on time and stay for a reasonable length of time. It includes never-ending concern about the maintenance and condition of the rental property.

When prospective tenants apply to rent an apartment, you have to make a judgment call about whether or not they are suitable. Sometimes you go by appearances, which is not something I like doing. I have been thoroughly indoctrinated with the idea that externals can be misleading. Didn't Jesus tell his Jewish contemporaries to "stop judging by mere appearances and make a right judgment?" (John 7:24). I prefer to give every person the benefit of the doubt when it comes to external manifestations, allowing for time to reveal more reliable inner clues. But a landlord cannot afford to do that, I have discovered. As a

stand-in lessor I found myself quickly judging an applicant by the cut of his hair or the tidiness of her car. Landlord and landladies love neatness freaks.

Protection against the weak?

And then there's the matter of the poor. The Bible is unequivocal about being partial towards poor people. The Lord "raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap," we read in Psalm 13:7. And in Proverbs 19:17 we are told that "he who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord." So here you are with a verse from the book of Proverbs in your hand and an applicant who's on welfare and not able to pay first and last month's rent on your doorstep.

First and last month's payment is a standard requirement in the house rental industry. It gives the landlord some protection against renters who suddenly up and leave or who cause damage. Without proper notice or with substantial damage, the landlord can be out a great deal of money if he does not have that little guarantee in the form of last month's rent.

Character concerns

So what do you do when the applicant tells you he or she cannot afford to pay last month's rent up front? Not only does that remove a protection, but it signals a poor start to a rental agreement and one that leaves the landlord feeling vulnerable. If the tenant cannot come up with the money now, what will happen down the road?

What complicates matters with people you don't know is that you cannot assume the same kind of community standards today that you could count on in previous times. There are a lot of unscrupulous characters out there who don't mind taking you for a ride.

A landlord is not supposed to ask whether a person goes to church or other place of worship, but finding out incidentally that someone does is a most reassuring fact for someone like me who values a religious upbringing. All of that goes into the pot of information when selecting a tenant. A religious community sets standards for behavior and offers financial support when there are difficulties.

Let's face it, a landlord acts much the same way an employer does when interviewing a prospective employee. He or she acts out of self-interest, or out of the interest of the enterprise.

All of this makes me ask myself whether private people should be in the business of being landlords and landladies for profit. Housing is such an important part of being human, especially in a cold climate, that it al-

most seems inhuman to make the provision of housing a profitable business. No matter how you cut it, you can't fulfil the love-your-poor-neighbor-as yourself command very well when your main goal is to protect your financial investment. And you're even less free to be charitable when it's someone else's property you are managing.

But the counter-argument is that if it's wrong to make money out of providing housing, it must be equally wrong to do it with the selling of food and clothing, which are just as essential to the human condition. It appears that this position is not tenable.

No parable of the landlords

But Jesus told the rich young man that if he wanted treasures in heaven, he should go and sell his possessions and give to the poor (Matt. 19:21). How does that translate for a landlord?

Of course, there are numerous ways in which a landlord can fulfil the commandments of the Lord. He can show understanding and patience when it comes to dealing with tenants. Being honest and up front, assuming responsibilities that come with the agreement and giving the occasional break come to mind as further characteristics that set good owners apart from lesser ones. But all of this one prefers to do with responsible and honorable tenants.

Unfortunately for me, Jesus told a parable of the tenants but not a parable of the landlords. So I'm left to sort things out for myself, which brings me to the somewhat lame-duck position that if you as landlord can possibly afford to give the poor person a break, you should do it, but not at the expense of your enterprise. And not all poor persons are good investments for your kindness either. As far as I know there is no commandment that urges us to reward irresponsible poor people.

For the rest, I have concluded that charity starts at home, but does not necessarily carry on to the privately rented home. For that reason it seems imperative that sufficient public housing be provided alongside the private so that those who are at the bottom of the economic heap, for whatever reason, can experience, along with rain and sunshine, the shelter God intends his image-bearing creatures to have.

BW

Postscript:

I just went against whatever I said in this editorial and rented out a one-bedroom apartment to a young woman with spiked hair, who's on social assistance and could not pay last month's rent. I will probably live to regret this soft touch of mine.

BW

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Opinion

Planting your family's roots in the local church

Luis Palau

How essential is the local church in developing strong, godly families? One man told me the church definitely takes second or third place on his list of priorities. "Family has to come first," he said. So he and his family don't attend church regularly any more. But if you remain shallow in your relationship to your local church, you will lose out on the support of other Christians when you need it most.

By neglecting to minister within your local church, you also cause other Christians to lose something. The Lord Jesus himself says in John 15 that he is the vine, and we are connected to him as branches. As a result, through Jesus, we are connected to each other. We are members of his Body, the church.

In 1 Corinthians 12:26 we read: "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it." How you relate or fail to relate to the Body of Christ directly affects other Christians. As Christians, we need to plant our family's roots deeply into the local church. But how?

Attend regularly

First, make a commitment to your local church. My wife, Pat, and I are active members of a church in Portland, Oregon. Although we travel part of every year to minister at evangelistic campaigns and conferences throughout the United States, Europe and Latin America, we're not excused from taking an active part in our home church and remaining in subjection to the elders. We feel it's important that we consult with them on major decisions involving our family, and sometimes even our entire evangelistic association.

My advice to every Christian is the same: Attend church regularly. Follow the prescribed procedures to become a member. Observe the Lord's Supper and follow him in baptism.

Claim it as your own

Second, speak well of your church. Even though it has faults, don't allow yourself to develop a critical spirit (1 Cor. 1:10). It is your "family" in Christ. Defend it! When others grumble about it, remind them to take the matter to the elders, not to the rest of the Body.



Luis Palau

It is important that parents learn to speak well of "our" church. Let your children hear you talking about "our" pastor, "our" elders, "our" deacons, "our" Sunday school, "our" church retreat. This will help them claim the church as their own as they grow older.

Also, speak well of your church by inviting others to attend with you. A church historian found that the average person in a particular denomination currently invites others to church once every 28 years. Surely we can do better than that!

Church is no club

Third, seek to minister within your local church. Ask what you can contribute to the Body of Christ through your involvement. Remember, "to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good" (1 Cor. 12:7). It isn't enough to

know we have spiritual gifts; we must use them.

Beware of the mindset that looks to see if the church will meet your needs. Since when is the church a country club where you pay your dues until you find something more exciting to do?

Instead, the attitude that should characterize us as Christians is love — a love that gives. The Lord Jesus said, "All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another" (John 13:35). When my family is ready to leave for church, we take certain expectations about what we want to get and leave them home with the dog. Consequently, everything we do receive is a blessing. We're not there to get, but to give.

Give with the heart

Fourth, give financially to support your local church. Although the New Testament doesn't give a fixed percentage for what we should give, it does emphasize the importance of regular giving. In 2 Corinthians, the apostle Paul explains that we should give proportionately (8:12), abundantly (9:6), purposefully (9:7) and cheerfully (9:7).

Although some may be able to give only 10 per cent of their income to the Lord, others may give much more, depending on their resources and the needs of the church. But the amount we give doesn't impress the Lord. He looks at our reasons for giving and our sacrifices to give, not the amount.

Pat and I taught our four sons

to tithe from the time they were young. Their small contributions may not have seemed important at the time, but now giving is a regular, exciting part of their lives.

Whatever you do for the least...

Fifth, meet the physical needs of your brothers and sisters in Christ. Whatever we do for the least of God's family, we actually do for him (Matt. 25:40). Don't wait until someone asks you to help. Take the initiative to visit the sick and elderly. Take food to those facing financial difficulties.

Several years ago, a friend lost his job. Some months later we heard that his family's house would be taken away if the payments weren't met. They had already sold their vehicles trying to meet their financial obligations. Pat suggested that we pay one of their house payments. We invited others to help, too. Together, as a Body, we can support each other in even the most difficult of times.

Befriend missionaries

Finally, show hospitality to your church's missionaries. Have you ever invited missionaries home to join your

family for dinner? Try it! Missionaries can be fascinating to chat with around the dinner table. And your children will fall more in love with the Lord because of those special visits.

I've seen this take place in the lives of my own sons. Today they are more outspoken about their faith than either my wife or I were at their age. In part, I believe this resulted from their friendships with missionaries.

It hasn't always been easy for me to follow the six principles I've discussed above. Sometimes I face tremendous pressures, because of my other commitments, to pull back and limit my participation in the local church. But I'm convinced from Scripture that as I continue getting my roots deep into the local church I will be the winner in the long run, and so will my family and my church.

I challenge you to re-evaluate the importance of the local church in your own life. God's desire is for his people to commune with each other in the local Body. Do you?

Dr. Luis Palau is an internationally respected evangelist who has proclaimed the gospel to more than 12 million people in 63 countries.

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Book Review

A month of fine spiritual meals

Marian Van Til

To Walk and Not Faint:**A Month of Meditations on Isaiah 40**

By Marva J. Dawn.

Grand Rapids, Mich.; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans, 1997. 2nd ed. ISBN 0-8028-4290-9. paper: 202 pp. \$14 (US).

Two years ago I read and reviewed Lutheran theologian and author Marva Dawn's book *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the-Century Culture* (CC, Sept. 22, 1995). I was impressed with her thoughtful insight and pastorally manner in approaching a "hot" topic. So when I learned that Eerdmans had published a second edition of *To Walk and Not Faint*, Dawn's

and lay retreats and is the founder of Christians Equipped for Ministry, based in Vancouver, Washington. (Her other earlier books are: *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, *The Hilarity of Community and Sexual Character*.)

Digs deep

My husband and I read this book out loud to each other as part of our suppertime devotions for a month and discussed the "Questions for Further Meditation" raised at the end of each chapter. The 31 chapters are slightly longer and require a little more thought than most mealtime devotional reading, but that was a richly rewarding way to use them. They may also be used in Bible study groups of all kinds, or for personal devotions (ask yourself the questions; they're worded in the first-person singular).

Dawn is a conscientious theologian whose extensive knowledge of Hebrew, and of language structure in general, allows her, and us, to delve deeply into this well-known chapter of Isaiah ("Comfort, comfort ye my people..."). She lets you in on every nuance, every bit of word-play, and each grammatical, structural detail that effects a verse's and the chapter's meaning.

What emerges is a most comforting and amazing picture of how our vast and eternal God, who calls all the stars by name (v. 26) relates intimately to us and to all living things "whose flesh is grass" and whose "constancy is like the flower of the field" (v. 6).

Wide audience

A blurb on the book cover asserts that Dawn "serves as a bridge between the academic and lay worlds." That's quite true. While she may stretch some readers a bit, her writing is not difficult. This is no ivory tower theological exercise disguised as meditations.

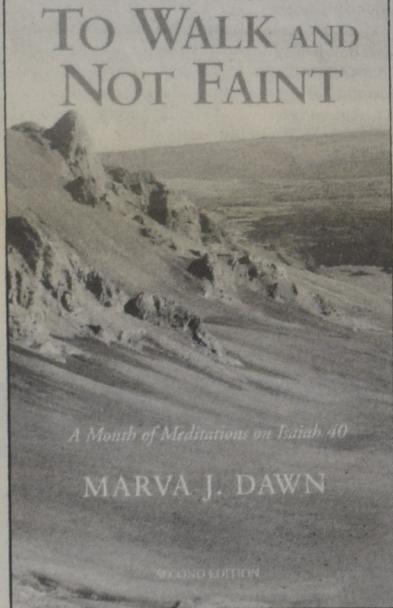
Nor is it an inductive-method exercise in "what Isaiah 40 means to me." Dawn constantly relates Isaiah's Word from the Lord to our lives in our postmodern, very secular society, and she does so speaking not only to us personally, but to all of us as the people of God, the church.

Not just 'doctrine'

The Reformed tradition has always stressed the "sovereignty of God." But for some, a wrong emphasis has made God seem remote, obscure and less than loving. Even for those of us who haven't formed that picture of God, a reading through some of the Old Testament does make one wonder sometimes what kind of God we actually have, and why he acts as he does.

Dawn's explication of Isaiah 40, however, will help to put God and his relation to human affairs in proper perspective. Never has the doctrine God's sovereignty been so comforting. That's because Dawn helps the reader experience that doctrine as a marvelous fact; she makes us see that only when we acknowledge God as the kind of God he presents himself to be in Scripture can we ourselves acknowledge our full humanity, and thus experience the fullness of God's grace.

I highly recommend this book. It's the kind you'll want to keep and re-read in the future.



month of meditations on Isaiah 40, I was eager to read it.

I wasn't disappointed. In fact, with just the two books of Dawn's that I've read (I'll be reading another shortly), she has become for me one of the few Christian authors whose works I know I will read and re-read from now on, regardless of topic.

I can count on her to write well, to make me think biblically and to deepen my knowledge of Scripture. Her trustworthy insights must have grown out of many hours of careful study of and with the Word (they seem to me right up there with the best current Reformed thinking), and have also been formed out of her experience of God's absolute reliability through her own intense struggles with physical illness, partial vision loss and other handicaps.

Dawn is a scholar with four master's degrees and a PhD in Christian ethics and the Scriptures. She is also a popular speaker for youth

TV Review

Vandezande to be featured in engaging profile on Vision TV

Marian Van Til

A Voice of Faith in the Public Square

Windborne Productions (Markham, Ont.) and Vision TV. Produced by Karen Pascal. Two-part program to air 10-10:30 p.m., Sept. 30 and Oct. 7.

Gerald Vandezande, well-known Christian Reformed public justice advocate, will appear on Vision TV at the end of this month as the subject of a two-part, one-hour interview. Vandezande is public affairs director of Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ), public policy co-ordinator of the Coalition for Religious Freedom in Education and government relations co-ordinator of the Ontario Multi-faith Coalition for Equity in Education.



Gerald Vandezande

a denial of Jesus"); the inception of CPJ; justice and mercy.

Part 2 focuses on the importance of our participation in the political process. Vandezande discusses power and responsibility; an "economy of enough"; the media and the "secularism that manipulates [it]"; separate schools; skeptics (we have to "walk alongside the skeptic, the cynic, the agnostic, acknowledging that we have solidarity in sin, but that we can also have solidarity in Jesus Christ"); polarization; living faith; and "the calling" — Christians must "announce the good news, practise it. Then thousands of people will ask for 'the reason for the hope that is in us.'"

How others see it

Sometimes a prophet doesn't get enough honor in his own country, as the biblical saying alludes, because he's too well known, or because some in that country disagree with him on this issue or that.

That's probably the situation with Gerald Vandezande and (at least parts of) the Christian Reformed community. However, perhaps this nationwide television profile will remind us that "one of ours" is greatly valued by many outside our gates, to continue the biblical allusion. And we can only rejoice at his biblical vision and profound witness for Christ in our very secular culture.

Church

Taking what comes

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 5:31-33).

This summer, I spent a few weeks visiting my family in Michigan. We all went out to a cottage on the "big lake" for two weeks, but — as is typical of Michigan — the weather was unco-operative. It rained most of the time, and even when the sun was shining it was far too cold to lie out on the beach. I was deeply disappointed, having looked forward to a much-needed vacation or relaxation and warmth in the summer sun. I had anticipated this time for months, and the rain left me feeling vaguely cheated.

The last Sunday that I was in Michigan, I was walking out of church on the way to my car when a woman behind me began to comment on the weather to her companion. "Have you ever seen an August like this?" she asked. My heart went out to her. I knew the complaint that she was about to make, and I turned with a smile to express my agreement. But, to my surprise, she didn't complain. "Everything is so green!" she said, in delight. "Usually August is such a dry, brown month. But this is beautiful!"

Overlooking a gift

This was an aspect of the soggy weather which had not occurred to me. I looked around me. It was unusually green, lush. The landscaped areas around the church were full of blooming flowers and rich, healthy grass. It really was beautiful. How had I missed seeing that before?

Obviously, I had missed this beauty because it was not the beauty I was anticipating. I was expecting to receive another gift — the gift of sunlight and warmth on my face and the relaxation of doing nothing while lying next to the water. Instead I received the gift of refreshing rain and green grass and plants in bloom, a gift I nearly missed seeing altogether because it was unexpected.

During the two weeks which my family spent at a cottage at the beach, we had a special guest for several days. She was the only person who never seemed disappointed by the weather and who thoroughly enjoyed every single day she spent with us. Perhaps because she's only two years old, Brittany has not yet learned to invest energy in anticipating what tomorrow will bring. Her understanding of time is still somewhat hazy. Her experience of being in a cottage at the beach is too limited for her to have many preconceived ideas of how such an experience ought to unfold.

She loved wading in the water, even though it was very cold. She loved walking on the road, looking at the weeds in bloom. She loved being indoors during the rain, coloring and

talking to herself or listening to someone read *A Snowy Day* again and again. I was bothered by the idea of reading *A Snowy Day* while at the beach in August, but she had no such scruples. Brittany was able to enjoy whatever life sent at the moment, because she had not decided in advance what life ought to be sending. She had not yet learned how to worry about her life.

Ignorance not bliss

I have another friend, many years older than Brittany, who shares the toddler's ignorance about what the future may bring, but for this woman that ignorance is not so joyful. She has Alzheimer's disease, and because of the memory loss which that disease brings she doesn't ever remember what day it is, or whether we're meeting for lunch, or whether someone is coming to visit.

No matter how many times she's been told about an event or an outing, she is always taken by surprise. But as an adult who is used to being able to plan her day and control her future, she finds this disconcerting rather than joyful. Every morning she gets up, expecting it to be Sunday, and six days out of seven she is disappointed. "I never know what's going on," she complains to me. Her ignorance of the future leaves her worried all the time.

It seems to me that God does want us to know "what's going on." When Jesus tells us not to worry about the future, he doesn't mean that we are to live in ignorance about the structure of our lives.

Let expectations go

It is not his will for us to live in such uncertainty that we are disoriented by our world and confused by events around us. The loss of memory is a painful disease which distorts our created nature and hampers our ability to rejoice in the good gifts God sends us. But God also wants us to let go of our expectations about what's coming enough to enjoy the real gifts he sends us, even when they're different from those for which we'd hoped.

Rather than determining in advance exactly what we're going to eat and wear, how we're going to enjoy ourselves and of what amusements we'll partake, we need to be more like the birds of the air, or the lilies of the field, or a cheerful two-year-old. We live in a lush, green, beautiful world; especially when it's raining.

Laura Smit is a pastor in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who is currently doing doctoral work in philosophical aesthetics at Boston University, Boston, Mass.

Chapter & Verse

Wayne Brouwer
Andrew Kuyvenhoven
★ Laura Smit
Al Wolters

Controversial Reformed pastor guilty of 'gross sexual misconduct'

SPRING LAKE, Mich. (URNS) — The Muskegon Classis of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) has found Rev. Richard Rhem, senior pastor of Christ Community Church of Spring Lake, Michigan, guilty of "gross sexual misconduct" and has deposed him from the ordained ministry. At 2,800 members with about 750 attending, Christ Community Church is one of the largest churches in the RCA.

The classis met for eight hours in closed session and passed four motions to declare Rhem guilty of "gross sexual misconduct," to affirm a need for reflection and prayer, to declare that Rhem was unrepentant, and to depose him from office. Rhem's church, however, has said it has no intention of removing him from its pulpit and has filed a lawsuit asking the Ottawa (Michigan) County Circuit Court to order classis to let the church leave the RCA with its property.

Salvation apart from Christ

Rhem and his church have been at loggerheads with the Muskegon Classis for nearly two years since Rhem's congregation allowed a church mostly composed of practicing homosexuals to meet in their building.

The classis later focused on Rhem's views about the nature of Scripture and his belief that salvation is possible apart from Christ; the latter view prompted ongoing efforts to require all RCA ministers and churches to annually reaffirm that salvation is through Christ alone.

On July 25 Christ Community filed a civil lawsuit which alleges that the "non-recognition of the independent status" of the church by the classis "has caused stress, discord, and unrest in the church and the Spring Lake community."

The lawsuit also claims that the RCA Book of Church Order is "inappropriate to regulate the relationship between the parties, as it does not provide for even rudimentary due process...."

'Reprehensible act'

Regional synod minister Rev. Sherwin Weener objected to the claims of unfairness by Rhem's attorney. "The Reformed Church

has been exceedingly concerned about justice and fairness. Due process is available to every member of the Reformed Church and that certainly includes Dick Rhem."

Rev. Patrick Shetler, chairperson of the synod overtures and judicial business committee, explains that in the RCA, "until there is approval of the classis, a church remains under the jurisdiction of the Reformed Church in America." Shetler said of Spring Lake's lawsuit, "I think it's a reprehensible act, a clear violation of Scripture, of 1 Corinthians 6:1-11. That any organization that would even claim to be Christian would take such action just shows total disregard for God's Word and the authority of Christ."

The sex charges against Rhem stem from allegations made by a former organist and member of the church who says Rhem conducted an extended affair with her and defended his conduct on religious grounds, thus doing spiritual damage to her and her marriage.

While classis was initially willing to let Rhem and his church withdraw from the denomination after a formal rebuke for his theological views, the sex charges derailed the proposed settlement when the executive officers of classis refused to sign a negotiated separation agreement which would have let the church leave.

Unless Rhem appeals the Muskegon Classis action within 30 days, he will forfeit his right to appeal to the Great Lakes Regional Synod or the RCA's highest assembly, the general synod.

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THE KIDNEY FOUNDATION OF CANADA

Feature

Maybe people over 60 shouldn't travel

by Harry Boonstra

As we filled out the forms for lost luggage (about half-way through our 50-hour trip), my wife and I wondered, "Maybe 60-year old folk shouldn't travel to the other side of the world." But that was on the way back from Indonesia, where we had visited our daughter and her family.

Most North Americans have recently come to know about Indonesia from the "alleged" scandal of Mr. Huang aiding and abetting the 1996 U.S. Democratic election campaign. Or perhaps they read about the death of several hundred people in Indonesia's most recent election. Some will know about the fraud surrounding the Busang gold mine or perhaps about the graceful dancers of Bali.

But there's much more that's worth knowing. Indonesia is a rich and varied country. Spread over thousands of islands, with over 200 ethnic groups (and many more languages), the country also boasts more diversified plant and animal life than any other country. The religious scene is also complex. About 85 per cent of the country is Muslim; the other "recognized" religions are Hindu (nearly all of Bali is Hindu), Buddhist, Roman Catholic and Christian (that is, Protestant). Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons are not allowed to proselytize. No wonder Indonesia's national slogan is "Unity In Diversity"; but it also is not surprising that the slogan is more easy to proclaim than to carry out.

Limited Dutch impact

One era of the country's past is its Dutch colonial period, from about 1600 to 1950. I am usually proud of my Dutch heritage, but not when I read its colonial history. I realize that Western colonial subjugation of

other continents is uniformly a tale of greed and bloody conquest. But the Dutch seemed to have outdone the average colonists in their brutal conquest of Indonesia.

I find it a bit difficult to muster much sympathy for the Dutch, British, Spanish and Por-

tion of Western Europe and how fortunate the benighted colonial heathen were to share in this civilization. Polite as the people of Java are, they might have guffawed if they had heard Mr. Kuyper.

We were surprised to see such limited remaining Dutch influence. After all, most of Latin America has a permanent Spanish imprint and a dominant Roman Catholic Church, and former British colonies use the English language and have retained the rich heritage of the Anglican Church and cricket. One finds no such pervasive influence here. Most Dutch place names have been changed to Indonesian (Buitenzorg is now Bogor), the educational system has hardly any Dutch influence, and the remnant of the (Dutch) Reformed Church is very small. Of course, there are some reminders. We were happy to be called "Oma" and "Opa," and had no difficulty finding our way to the "kantoor" or "WC."

Dutch New Guinea; the other half of the island is Papua New Guinea) nearly defies description. Consisting of mostly impenetrable jungle, with a wealth of wildlife, the mountains make travel even more impossible, with some mountains reaching "snow level."

Even though all of Indonesia was "discovered" centuries ago, Irian Jaya remained isolated and its people were untouched by outside contact. Racially the Irian people are related to the Australian aborigines ("Papua" means kinky hair), including at least one pygmy tribe. Hundreds of people groups live in their simple huts, each group very similar to others in terms of agricultural subsistence, but also including great variations — an anthropologist's paradise. Many of the tribes engaged in vicious raids and wars, including head hunting and cannibalism. Most anthropologists agree that those practices have probably been eliminated completely during

was alternately cheering the inventiveness and bravery of the Allied troops and then overcome with the horror and brutality of war and the incredible loss of human life.

Missionaries make real sacrifices

On my campus it's fashionable to deride fundamentalist and evangelicals and their schools. And I'm sure that the intellectual rigor of these schools often needs shoring up. But a trip to the mission field is a good remedy for our arrogance.

The impact of missionaries from fundamentalist churches and schools is truly awesome. Teachers, church planters, nurses, doctors, pilots, translators — all of these have left the comfort of Main Street to work in harsh surroundings, with often very slow results. Most missionaries take their hardships in stride, but the two difficulties that really gnaw at their spirits are their children's education and family illness "back home."

Our daughter teaches in a fine school for missionary children (it has several computers and a library), but many of the families do not live near the school, and their children have to live in the dormitory. Another family was agonizing about the terminal illness of a grandfather in North America, and making complicated preparations to leave the mission field to go home. And pastoral care for these families is often in short supply. Even though they are very supportive to each other, the lack of a "regular pastor" at times impairs their own work.

Besides preaching to this missionary group I also had opportunity to preach in a local church. I learned two skills in the same service. One was preaching with the help of an interpreter, the other was preaching in the dark. About halfway through the service the lights went out. And when it's dark in the tropics, it's dark. Since I always use sermon notes in my preaching, I was caught off guard, but with plenty of perspiration and inspiration I (and the interpreter) continued bravely.

Many have been Christianized

Most of the Irian people groups practised animist religion. Dutch missionaries began mission work around



Thelma Boonstra (top centre) surrounded by her daughter's family.

tuguese as they killed each other for the most prosperous nutmeg islands. But the mayhem and butchery inflicted on local populations cries to high heaven. And the preaching of the gospel was often prompted by a mixture of Christian concern for pagan souls and commercial opportunism — after all, natives who are taught that the Bible says that one must obey one's master are easier to control.

I recall reading an essay by the Dutch Christian statesman Abraham Kuyper, in which he lauded the wonderful civiliza-

Many of the Protestant churches still collect the offering in black velvet bags, and gather in a "klassis" and a "synod."

An isolated people

Our main destination was Irian Jaya, where our daughter and her family work under the auspices of Mission Aviation Fellowship. She is a teacher at a school for missionary children in Sentani (near the capital Jayapura — which was, of course, at one time called Hollandia).

Irian Jaya (at one time called

the past 20 years.

Near Sentani we visited a park which houses a monument for General Douglas Mac Arthur. Mac Arthur put up temporary headquarters at that location, in his drive toward the Philippines. In the missionary school library I located a history book detailing the Pacific stage of the Allied war against Japan, and spent a day poring over texts and maps. Being "on location" and having seen just a bit of the jungle territory made me realize as never before the momentous struggle of the Allied armies. Reading the story I

1850 and worked under incredibly difficult conditions. One account notes that many died from "the rather prosaic martyrdom of malaria." (The missionaries were spared territorial competition because the Dutch government ordered them to divide the work geographically.

come to observe and describe the people's lives, while the missionaries come to change (much of) the people's life.

It also seems to me that the missionary tends to paint a very dark picture of tribal life, while the anthropologist tends to glorify it, and resists any at-

tion that face most village children. Or again, if they condone the Dani practice of women cutting off parts of their fingers whenever a loved one dies.

Cultural snapshots

One highlight of our trip was a week-long stay in a missionary outpost in the mountains among the Dani people. Although I am usually a bit uncomfortable flying in small airplanes (what do they do if that one engine gives out?), the expertise of the MAF pilots does help to quiet one's fears. And flying low over the jungle territory provides an incredible view of the patchwork of mountains crags, scooped-out valleys, village huts and the occasional airstrip. Besides flying missionaries to their destinations, MAF also provides transportation to villagers. On our flight we were accompanied by four local people, a rooster and a pig.

One snapshot: Picture a woman Bible translator from Wisconsin who has lived in the

and colors are divided into two groups, with white and red being in the same word group. For "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," she was contemplating, "I stand by your hut and clear my throat."

Another snapshot: An Indonesian physician from metropolitan Jakarta, functioning in a very primitive hospital with a 20-year old X-ray camera (and an even older generator for back-up during the frequent power failures), battling malaria, dysentery, respiratory ailments and skin diseases. The doctor also serves as electrician, carpenter and business manager. In addition, the hospital raises rabbits to increase the protein intake for the patients.

Modesty is relative

"Modesty" is a bit complicated to define here. One still sees bare-breasted older women, because they remember the time when only prostitutes covered their breasts. The story is told that a missionary society back home was shocked to hear that the tribal women went topless. They promptly sent a load of tee-shirts to cover such wanton nakedness. The women of the village were delighted, as they trooped off with their shirts. The next day they reappeared with two holes cut neatly out of the front of each shirt — the better to nurse their babies.

National Geographic readers may recall photographs of the Dani people. The men go naked, except for a penis "sheath" made from a hollowed out gourd. The Dani were shocked to hear from the missionary that in a neighboring tribe the men lacked this sign of modesty. They all spent a day making extra gourds and sent the missionary to distribute the gourds among those lasciviously naked people.

Our other side trip was a one-day tourist jaunt to a Pacific Ocean beach. I also had my first snorkeling experience. A foot below the surface was this gorgeous expanse of coral reef with caves and colorful plants, and hundreds of tropical fish darting around within an arm's length.

Not quite Cousteau level, but now I know again why the Creator declared it "very good" when the waters brought forth their swarms of living creatures.

Oh yes — that 50-hour trip. Up to our departure from Jakarta all our flights had been on time. But then.... It became part Kafka, part Chevy Chase. Arriving at the ticket counter we were

informed that our seats had been sold to someone else!

"You come back tomorrow."

"But you can't do that!"

"Our company always overbooks 10 percent. Just come tomorrow."

Another American, with a more colorful vocabulary than ours, set back international diplomacy several decades. Among his more printable outbursts: "Haven't you people at least heard of vouchers? I wanna talk to somebody who speaks regular English!" The clerk, handling a bevy of irate customers, three telephones, and a computer terminal, remained smilingly (and smoking) unruffled. And, about 30 minutes after the scheduled departure time, he miraculously did find two open seats.

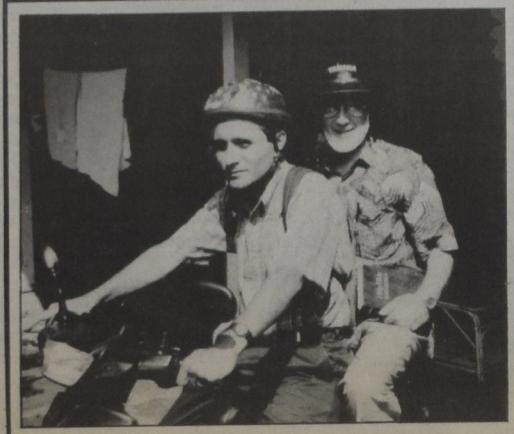
"But plane is leaving. You run very fast!" We ran very fast. At each corner an attendant with a walkie-talkie shouted, "Hold the plane! Two more coming!" Glancing at the boarding passes, my wife puffed, "I think they're first class seats." And so they were. As we came stumbling through the aisle, a sanguine hostess greeted us: "Madam, Sir — would you like a glass of champagne?" After the hassle — this was rest. This was Sabbath. We decided always to travel executive class.

But we also discovered that even though *shalom* already comes to us in this life — it is not yet complete. The stopover at Honolulu was problematic. We touched down for three seconds and then we roared off down the runway again. The pilot explained that windshear had hindered the landing. The second time was successful, but afterwards the mechanics discovered that the landing gear had become damaged and the plane was to be grounded. We all deplaned and then started the onerous process of finding alternate airlines and new connections for several hundred passengers. Oh, yes — it also turned out that our baggage had somehow stayed behind in Jakarta.

It was then that we said, "Maybe people over 60 shouldn't travel to the other side of the world."

We were (eventually) greeted at the Grand Rapids airport with "Good vacation?"

"Yes, it was a very good vacation."



Harry Boonstra (r.) and Joe Ditta on their way to church.

ly — Protestants were to work in the North and Roman Catholics in the South).

American missionary activity in Irian Jaya began in earnest in the 1950s. The stories of those early missionaries make for astounding reading — Don Richardson's *Peace Child* is probably best known. Another wonderful story, with a much lighter touch, is William Cutts' *'Weak Thing' in Moni Land*.

Many of Irian's people have been Christianized, have built churches and Bible schools, and have been active in preaching the gospel to other groups. Such local evangelism is essential, since it is becoming increasingly difficult for outside missionaries to obtain visas. Anthropologists and missionaries agree that there are still "undiscovered" tribal groups in the impenetrable jungle.

Different approaches

Missionaries and anthropologists often make uneasy partners. The anthropologists can furnish helpful ethnographic materials (although the missionaries themselves usually spend much longer in the villages than the anthropologists) and the missionaries provide air transportation. One can oversimplify their different goals by positing that the anthropologists



People from the Dani tribe.

tempt to make changes. Of course, one can ask the anthropologists what possible value there could be in tribal warfare, or if they would want their own children to be exposed to the unsanitary conditions, health problems and malnutri-

mountains of Irian Jaya for 26 years. She said not a word about the hardships, but led us in a lively discussion on the difficulty of translating the text, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Snow is unknown to the people,

Feature

Seven years of theology at seven colleges

Enjoying the rainbow of faith

Syd Hielema

When I entered the Toronto School of Theology in September 1989, I had no idea what it could be like to study theology at an academic institution with very few connections to the Reformed tradition. I had studied at or taught in schools associated with the Christian Reformed community for 28 years, and my understanding of the Christian faith was thoroughly shaped by that heritage.

"As a Reformed person I had in some ways come to focus on my own sin at the expense of learning important truths about that amazing grace which allows one to live without fear."

Today, eight years later, as I am approaching the finish line of my studies at TST, I'm happy to have the opportunity to reflect on the ways in which I as a "product" of the Reformed community have fared at this decidedly un-Reformed institution.

The Toronto School of Theology is a federation of seven theological colleges, most of which are situated close to Queen's Park in downtown Toronto, on the edge of the University of Toronto campus. These colleges represent four denominations: Roman Catholic, Angli-

can, United and Presbyterian.

I am enrolled at Wycliffe College, an evangelical (low) Anglican school that both prepares students for the Anglican ministry and provides graduate programs leading to masters and doctoral degrees. Every TST student is enrolled at one of its colleges, but because no college is large enough to provide a full program for its students, students take courses at any or all of the seven affiliated colleges.

Deep respect for Scripture

During my first semester in the fall of 1989 I immediately encountered the best and worst of TST, and both these extremes were related to the study of the New Testament. The best came in the form of a course taught by a Jesuit priest in which 10 of us read through portions of the New Testament together in Greek. The class was characterized by a humble respect for the Scriptures and for each other.

Because the student make-up was highly varied denominationally, the professor would regularly invite each of us to interpret a passage in the light of our own heritage. I still remember clearly the day we focused on passages related to the Lord's Supper, and I learned that the Reformed tradition was the only one represented which emphasizes the 1 Corinthians 11 passage which warns about eating the bread and drinking the cup in an unworthy manner.

Did I come from the only tradition which took self-examination seriously? My conclusion was quite different: I came to see that as a Reformed person I had in some ways come to focus on my own sin at the expense of learning important truths about that amazing grace which allows one to live without fear.

A disturbing course

That Greek course stands in dark contrast with another course, one titled "Introduction to the New Testament," led by a different lecturer every week from the seven TST colleges.

This course basically taught me two things: (1) how utterly fragmented the spiritual direction of TST is; and (2) how easy it is for biblical scholars to treat Scripture as a dead corpse to be analyzed in the manner in which one conducts an autopsy, rather than respecting it as the living Word of God.

To quite an extent the New Testament was described as a thoroughly human work, a jumbled collection of writings by leaders in the early church which recorded various teachings to further the cause of their own local congregations.

I found taking the course to be quite traumatic, and it caused me a few sleepless nights. In this short summary such views seem easy to dismiss, but after hearing lengthy arguments carefully developed week after week, I found their approaches difficult to refute in an off-hand and simplistic way. I had to choose between burying my head in the sand and ignoring what they were saying, or tackling it head-on without knowing in advance where I would end up.

I chose the latter route, and ended up realizing that the Scriptures are still the living Word of God but that they are also a wonderfully human account written by flesh-and-blood authors in concrete situations, using the communication genres of their day to express God's truth.

Since taking that course I have discovered Herman Bavinck's description of the organic inspiration of Scripture and have found it to be very helpful for describing both its divine inspiration and its wonderfully human character.

During the three years prior to our family's move to Sioux

Center in August 1996, I taught a course in dealing with congregational and pastoral identity to first-year students preparing for the Anglican ministry. What a wonderful privilege it was for me as a Reformed person to be able to participate in the training of Anglican pastors!

The majority of the students were "second career" people who had heard a call to ordained ministry after working in another area and had come back to school with a passion for the Lord and his church. They found it refreshing to be taught by someone from a tradition other

unity of the Old and New Testaments.

On the other hand, I still remember clearly reading in my first year of study a Lutheran theologian who wrote, "Reformed churches have a deep respect for Scripture, but in such a way that they are also the most schismatic." That observation helped me to recognize, also in myself, impulses towards fear, judgmentalism, self-righteousness and divisiveness that are easily present just below the surface of Reformed ways of thought. I learned that I had (and have) a lot to learn about grace, and I suspect that my gap in this area is symptomatic of a wider Reformed state of being.

Rainbow church

Second, my time at TST helped me enjoy the many-colored splendor of the Kingdom of God. One day we will be celebrating the wedding feast of the Lamb with members of the Anglican, United, Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Mennonite, Baptist, Pentecostal and all the rest of the Christian churches one can meet at TST, as well as Reformed folks.

What a blessing it was to already begin to enjoy communion with them in small ways as a warm-up for that great day! I would sadly shake my head as I followed disputes within the Reformed community, thinking: *The variety of believers I meet at TST represents the colors of a rainbow, and the differences within the Reformed community are like the differences between red and orange. Why can't we get along?* I must add that I'm also encouraged to see the Reformed community increasingly learning to agree to disagree within its own community as it also builds bridges to other Christian traditions.

TST helped me begin answering these two questions that many of us wrestle with: What is it to be Reformed? and What is it to be a member of the one, holy, catholic church? My wrestling continues, as I sense it also continues within the entire Reformed community. I am thankful that the Lord led me to spend seven years at the Toronto School of Theology to work through issues such as these.

Syd Hielema teaches theology at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, and is a doctoral student at the Toronto School of Theology.



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**Church
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quotes**



Rev. Jacob Kuntz

Leaders of tomorrow?

Maclean's magazine came with a special Canada Day issue in which were featured "100 Canadians to watch." In the column "The little world of Father Raby" (Catholic Register of July 14-21) Father Raby expressed his dismay and disappointment over the type of people who were selected. We have the feeling that many of our readers will agree with him.

"The special Canada Day issue featured '100 Canadians to watch.' The aim of the feature was worthwhile. Editor-in-chief Lewis wrote that the exploits of previous nominees 'are useful reminders that much of what is important in life is not necessarily played out in the House of Commons or on the daily newscasts,' and that 'the focus of the country's elites often has precious little to do with the way real people lead their lives.'

"True enough. But in the long list of those featured there were few whose aim was anything more than personal success, fame or fortune.

"Apart from a nurse and a few involved in medical research studies to help better the lives of others, the list was heavy with entrepreneurs and entertainers such as actors, playwrights, novelists, songwriters and sports hopefuls.

"There was not one person interested in improving the moral or spiritual tone of society in the country which editor-in-chief

Lewis concludes is 'among the most gifted and blessed in the world.'

"The 100 remarkable Canadians, according to explanatory notes, were chosen by a team from hundreds of worthy names submitted.

"But the ones selected show the mindset of the team as to who is worthy. It had no place for a budding Mother Teresa or Jean Vanier whose goals are not personal fame or fortune, but the spiritual as well as the material good of others.

"In our own parish four young people are going off for courses on leadership so that they can work among our Catholic youth and offset the selfish, indulgent, materialistic values of the day that lead to drug and sex abuses which destroy lives.

"It is the same self-indulgent spirit that is also at the root of what Pope John Paul calls the 'culture of death' which promotes or accepts abortion and euthanasia, the greatest abuses of our time."

Let your light shine

Reading various church papers we are often struck by the fact that those in other communions listen to (and agree with) spokespersons from our own Reformed community. Gerald Vandezande is frequently in the news. And in the July 7 issue of The

Catholic Register we found a report on a speech by Calvin Seerveld for the 200 delegates who attended a recent conference on Christian art in Montreal. The last sentence of the report: "He was greeted with a standing ovation."

rarely seen in commercial art galleries or mainline churches. This work should 'point to the quiet splendor of the ordinary and be illuminated by grace.' Its purpose is 'to bring beauty to those who have lost their way and ache for home.'

"Seerveld appealed to artists to create a more public form of art, 'the equivalent of street

Threat to charitable tax status

The following is quoted from a magazine that, strictly speaking, is not a church paper. The Interim is Canada's pro-life, pro-family news-

paper. The August issue contained "Christian groups on hit-list." Is the charitable tax status of some Christian groups in jeopardy?

"Pro-life organizations have expressed concern over Department of National Revenue plans to revoke the charitable status of a number of Christian or church-affiliated organizations.

"The July 12, 1997, *Canada Gazette* which publishes federal government notices, lists hundreds of organizations facing a change to their charitable tax status. Charitable status allows organizations to issue tax receipts for donations. Revoking that status poses significant fundraising problems for such organizations.

"A cursory reading of the *Canada Gazette* list indicates a clear majority of groups losing their charitable tax status are Christian or church-affiliated.

"Among some of the groups

listed are Crooked River Lutheran Church in Saskatchewan, the United Pentecostal Church in New Brunswick, a Christian community church in Hanover, Ont., and the Spanish speaking Catholic Community of the archdiocese of Vancouver.

"Christian-affiliated organizations aren't the only ones facing a change to their charitable tax status. At least two pro-life organizations, Alliance for Life and Human Life International, were given notice of a similar revocation....

"Revenue Canada said Human Life International did not meet criteria for charitable status, particularly in advancing educational or community work.

"Meanwhile, Focus on the Family, a group fighting to defend the traditional family unit,

was notified that it will be audited by federal tax officials.

"Although decisions on revoking the charitable status of organizations are supposed to be made at random, pro-life and pro-family groups wonder why so many church type organizations have been targeted. They suggest the decisions may be motivated by ideology rather than strictly by chance.

"According to Gwen Landolt (of REAL women of Canada), Alliance for Life and Human Life Intl. have been permitted to keep their charitable tax status pending the outcome of their ongoing appeal. Focus on the Family, however, is 'in limbo' as federal officials have been slow to proceed with their audit."

Stuck with your temperament?

It is always worthwhile to read the editorials in the Salvation Army's War Cry. They are simple messages, geared to simple people, but they almost always express the essence of a Christian lifestyle. In the August 16 issue Lt.

Col. Ryan — who was previously the editor and is now back after some years — wrote about people who feel that they are stuck with their temperament and that they can do nothing about it.

a surprising number of people live as if it were true.

"You've heard it before: 'I'm too old — too young — too busy — to change; 'my father — mother — grandparents were like this and I'm stuck with this personality.'

"J.I. Packer, a well-known Canadian theologian, writes in one of his books: 'Temperament is the raw material out of which character is formed. Character is what we do with our temperament. Personality is the final product, the distinct individuality that results.... I am not to become (or remain) a victim of my temperament.'

"Even though this belief is not biblical, and has no basis in fact,

"We have only to remember

the ecstatic cry of Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*: 'I'm not the man I was!' to know that the age-old dream of being able to change is more than a vain wish.

"God's Word contains countless stories of people whose lives have been changed by the power of God. And not only are there stories, there are also clear directions by which a person who feels trapped by his personality can be released by the power of God into the person our heavenly Father wants him to become.

"Ah," you say, "doesn't God love me just as I am?" And the answer is clear: God does love us each just as we are. In fact, he loves us so much he is not willing for us to remain prisoners of our temperaments. He accepts us as we are so that he might change us to become the person he wishes us to be. As the Bible says, 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new' (2 Cor. 5:17, NKJV)."

Jacob Kuntz is a retired Christian Reformed pastor who lives in Brampton, Ont., where he works half-time as chaplain in Holland Christian Homes.

Classifieds

Classified Rates	Marriages	Anniversaries	Obituaries	Obituaries
<p>(Revised February 1, 1995)</p> <p>Births \$25.00</p> <p>Marriages & Engagements \$40.00</p> <p>Anniversaries \$45.00</p> <p>2-column anniversaries \$90.00</p> <p>Obituaries \$45.00</p> <p>Notes of thanks \$35.00</p> <p>Birthdays \$40.00</p> <p>All other one-column classified advertisements: \$15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is \$15.00.</p> <p>Letter under file number \$35.00 extra. Photos: \$25.00 additional charge.</p> <p>Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive</p> <p>ATTENTION!</p> <p>a) <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.</p> <p>b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is not acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.</p> <p>c) Photographs sent by fax are not acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.</p> <p>d) <i>Christian Courier</i> will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.</p> <p>e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of \$15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).</p> <p>NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS</p> <p>We offer a one-year subscription for only \$25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the <i>Christian Courier</i> and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose \$25.00 and the couple's correct address.</p> <p>Christian Courier 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 Phone: (905) 682-8311 Fax: (905) 682-8313</p>	 <p>LOHR/TAVARES: With thankfulness to God, the families of</p> <p>JANA LOHR and</p> <p>PAUL TAVARES</p> <p>are pleased to announce the marriage of their children. The wedding will take place on Saturday, Sept. 13, 1997, at 1:30 p.m. in the Ancaster Chr. Ref. Church, Ancaster, Ont.</p> <p>Future address: 1001 Main St. W., Apt. 209, Hamilton, ON L8S 1A9</p>	<p>1952 September 13 1997 Psalm 118:14</p> <p>We are happy and thankful to the Lord, that, D.V., Sept. 13, 1997, we may celebrate the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents.</p> <p>ANDY and HAMMIE DEVRIES (nee DEJONG)</p> <p>Anne & Mike Godfrey — Hamilton Devan</p> <p>Tracy & Dave Vernest — Blackstock Cameron, Kyle, Mark</p> <p>Rose & Harvey Lootsma — Kincardine Heather, Nicole</p> <p>Lloyd & Rose Devries — Bowmanville Brandon</p> <p>Rob & Melanie Devries — Bowmanville Brett, Luke</p> <p>Address: 3A Suncrest Blvd., Bowmanville, ON L1C 2G6</p>	<p>Wisch Grimsby the Neth. Ont.</p> <p>Aug. 26, 1917 - Aug. 23, 1997 "My grace is sufficient to you" (2 Cor. 12:9).</p> <p>Peacefully, at Shalom Manor, Grimsby, Ont., the Lord called home</p> <p>HERMAN LAMMERS formerly of Burlington, Ont., in his 80th year.</p> <p>Beloved husband of Riet Lammers (nee van Zeyl).</p> <p>Dear father of:</p> <p>Dirk & Brenda Lammers — Waterdown, Ont.</p> <p>Amanda, Benjamin, Matthew, Thomas, Adam</p> <p>Andy & Mary Anne Lammers — Aylmer, Ont.</p> <p>Jennifer, Jason</p> <p>Wilma & Tim Nicholls — Newmarket, Ont.</p> <p>Melissa, Katherine, Bryan</p> <p>John Lammers — Burlington, Ont.</p> <p>Survived by Leida Buesink (sister) of Strathroy, Ont., and one brother and three sisters-in-law in the Netherlands.</p> <p>The funeral service was held on Aug. 26, 1997, in the Bethel Chr. Ref. Church, Waterdown, Ont., Pastor Erick Schuringa officiating.</p> <p>Correspondence address: Riet Lammers, 477 Springbank Cr., Burlington, ON L7T 2W8</p>	<p>Jehovah is my light and my salvation near; Who shall my soul affright or cause my heart to fear? While God my strength, my life sustains, Secure from fear my soul remains (Ps.27).</p> <p>On Aug. 22, 1997, the Lord took to himself his dear child</p> <p>DOROTHY ZEKVELD-BENSCHOP in her 67th year.</p> <p>Loving wife of the late George Zekveld (1982), and remembered as a dear sister and aunt by: Inez Van Valen — Dubbeldam, the Neth.</p> <p>Jean Dykstra — Lindsay, Ont.</p> <p>Len & Anne Benschop — Wooler, Ont.</p> <p>Jasperina Kapteyn — Hamilton, Ont.</p> <p>Martina & Arie Zekveld — Norwich, Ont.</p> <p>Adriana & John Struyk — Sioux Center, Iowa</p> <p>Shirley & Harry Hagens — Coquitlam, B.C.</p> <p>34 nieces and nephews.</p> <p>May the words of Isaiah 41:10 remain a comfort to her children and grandchildren:</p> <p>"Do not be afraid, for I am with you; don't be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you with my right hand."</p>
	Anniversaries	Obituaries	Personal	For Rent
	<p>1957 September 14 1997 Essex, Ont.</p> <p>We celebrate the goodness of God in the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents</p> <p>ALBERT and NIESJE SPITSE (nee VAANDERING)</p> <p>Congratulations from: John & Heather Spitsse</p> <p>Michael, Michelle, Andrea, Cheryl Patricia & Mike Schaafsma</p> <p>Natalie, Zachary, Anita, Hannah Sylvia & Kirk Drew</p> <p>Krista, Mathew, Giselle Gary & Sonja Spitsse</p> <p>James, Pam, John ... Choose today whom you will serve...</p> <p>"As for me and my family we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).</p> <p>You are invited to an open house on Saturday, Sept. 13, 1997, from 2-4 p.m., at the home of Albert and Niesje Spitsse.</p> <p>Home address: 288 Fairview Ave. E., Essex, ON N8M 2V9</p>	<p>In July the Lord called home our dear parents</p> <p>MINNIE PLANTINGA Nov. 14, 1912 - July 19, 1997 and</p> <p>AEBE (ALBERT) PLANTINGA Nov. 22, 1910 - July 26, 1997</p> <p>They were the father and mother of 10 children, grandparents of 37, and great-grandparents of 11 children.</p> <p>Stewart & Doris Plantinga</p> <p>Daryl & Jan, Shirley & Troy (Julia, Larissa)</p> <p>Joseph (deceased) & Cathy Plantinga</p> <p>Mariene & Craig (Luke, Mary), Sandra, Karen & Stewart, Beverly, Allen & Melanie (Spencer)</p> <p>Annette & Frank Vink</p> <p>Kathleen & Harvey, Tim & Leslie, Mark</p> <p>Gilles & Margaret Plantinga</p> <p>Ria, Henry, Dennis</p> <p>Ella & Walter Land</p> <p>Lorraine, Daniel & Francine (Stefan, Arielle, Kayla, Josiah), Phillip & Tina (Cheyanne, Brandon), Wilner, Lennic</p> <p>Richard & Gen Plantinga</p> <p>Michelle & Randy, Renae</p> <p>Albert & Grace Plantinga</p> <p>Malinda, Brian, Daniel, Diana</p> <p>Dora & Gerald Nanninga</p> <p>Kirsten, Paul, Rachel, Heather</p> <p>Don & Marilyn Plantinga</p> <p>Trina, Laval (deceased), Tannis, Lyndon, Bethany</p> <p>Duane & Sheryl Plantinga</p> <p>Benjamin, Jeremy, Jonathan, Jennifer</p> <p>Funeral services were held at the Neerlandia Chr. Ref. Church, Neerlandia, Alta.</p> <p>"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life" (John 5:24).</p>	<p>Single Christian, never married, 29-year-old male, seeking a Christian female, 26-30 for a long-term relationship. I'm college educated. My interests are snowmobiling, camping, going out with friends, church related activities, and I enjoy country living. I would love to hear from you, preferably from Southwestern Ontario, if you hold similar interests. Please reply to File #2672, c/o <i>Christian Courier</i>, 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.</p>	<p>CLINTON, ONTARIO ADULT LIFE LEASE RESIDENCES</p> <p>available, 936 sq.ft. to 1235 sq.ft. Fully wheelchair accessible, sprinkler system, central air, security throughout building. Dutch and English spoken. For more info. call (519) 233-7296 or (519) 482-7862.</p>
ATTENTION!			An Anniversary coming up? Please note...	
<p>If you are considering sending us an ad via fax, please be sure to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • send printed or typed copy • include billing address • include contact person with phonenumbers. <p>Thank You.</p>			<p>If you would like to place an anniversary announcement please note the dates that <i>Christian Courier</i> does not publish a paper (see page 5, publication box). Please keep in mind the date of the anniversary and the open house, if there is one. Ten days before the issue date all copy should be in. This will avoid the disappointment of people being informed too late about an anniversary date or open house of dear friends.</p>	

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Rev. Henry Eshuis Emeritation

We invite all who know and have benefitted from the ministry of the **Rev. Henry Eshuis** to his farewell service on **September 28, 1997, at 4:30 p.m.**, in the **Bethany Chr. Ref. Church, Fenwick, Ont.**

After 35 years of faithful service, he is retiring from full-time ministry. We wish him and his wife, Margaret, God's continued blessings in the years ahead.

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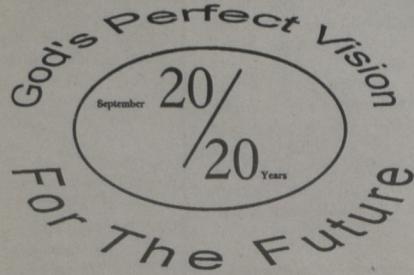
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Classifieds**Events****Miscellaneous****Miscellaneous**

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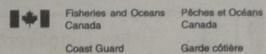
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Canada

NC

Events

25th Anniversary

Campus Ministry - McMaster University

Come and join us in celebrating, and expressing our gratitude to our covenant-keeping God for the **twenty-fifth anniversary** of our **Campus Ministry** at **McMaster University** in Hamilton, Ont. The highlights of this celebration will be on **Thursday, Sept. 25, 1997, at 8 p.m.**, with a **Mass Meeting** at the **Ewart-Angus Centre 1A1**, Health Sciences, McMaster University, with as main speaker, **Dr. Brian Walsh**, CR Campus Pastor at the University of Toronto, who will address us and commemorate our challenge to the academic community under the theme, "Scorching The Earth For Fun And Profit," in the context of Christianity and the end of modernity. Special music will be provided by Peter and Cheryl Tigchelaar. Admission is **FREE!!!**

On **Friday, Sept. 26, 1997**, a special anniversary banquet will be held in **Celebration Hall**, McMaster University, with Rev. Michael Veenema, Campus Pastor at London's Western University, who will be the after dinner speaker on the theme, "Snakes, Stories, Country Club and God" (reflections on the campus ministry). Peter Wyngaarden will be the Master of Ceremony. Tickets will be on sale for \$25 or \$40 for two, or a table of eight \$160. For more information, contact the Chaplaincy Centre, tel. (905) 525-9140, ext. 24207 & 24123, or, after 7 p.m., Aren Geisterfer, tel. (905) 524-0488, or members of our Campus Committee.

This promises to be a joyful celebration in gratitude to our God, the faithful and compassionate One!

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

- Sept. 13 Concert at 7:30 p.m., at Benton St. Baptist Church, **Kitchener**, Ont. (organ, violin and piano) featuring O. Ariss, R. Braun, C. Marsh and J. Oldengarm.
- Sept. 14 Rev. Hans Uittenbosch's 40th anniversary celebration, 9:30 a.m., Covenant CRC, **Barrie**, Ont. (See CC, Aug. 29, 1997)
- Sept. 16 Noon hour organ recital by Jonathan Oldengarm, St. James Cathedral, **Toronto**, Ont.
- Sept. 17-23 Well-known Frisian entertainer Teake van der Meer is back! Ontario tour starts: **Sept. 17**: 7:30 p.m., Community Hall, **Jarvis**, Ont.; **Sept. 19**: 7:30 p.m., Comm. Chr. School, **Strathroy**, Ont.; **Sept. 20**: 7:30 p.m., Durham CHS, **Bowmanville**, Ont.; and **Sept. 23**: 7:30 p.m., Chr. School, **Wellandport**, Ont. Info./tickets: Bev. Slofstra (519) 587-2162 (#)
- Sept. 20 Lynelle Pierce in concert with Sarnia Friendship Group, Second CRC, **Sarnia**, Ont. Watch for local announcements.
- Sept. 26 Organ recital by Canadian award-winning organist, Thomas Annand, at Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. Info./tickets: (905) 648-2131.
- Sept. 27 **Stephen Series Caring Ministry Workshop** at Covenant CRC, **St. Catharines**, Ont., from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. led by Carolyn Horton from St. Petersburg, Fl. For registration/info, please call Pauline Drenth at (905) 935-9802.
- Sept. 28 Dutch worship service led by Rev. J. Hoytema, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont.
- Oct. 8 Noon hour organ recital by Jonathan Oldengarm, Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, **Toronto**, Ont.
- Oct. 9 Noon hour organ recital by Jonathan Oldengarm, St. Paul's Anglican Church (Bloor & Jarvis), **Toronto**, Ont.
- Oct. 16 Canadian poet and novelist Joy Kogawa will be at Redeemer College for book signings and a public reading at 8 p.m., RC, **Ancaster**, Ont. Free admission.
- Oct. 18 The Netherlands Bazaar, 10 a.m.-10 p.m., Thornhill Community Centre (Bayview Ave. & John St.), **Thornhill**, Ont. Info.: (905) 477-1243 (#)
- Oct. 18 Concert by the WLU Symphony, featuring organist Jonathan Oldengarm, 7:30 p.m., Benton St. Baptist Church, **Kitchener**, Ont.
- Oct. 25 Christian Rainbows Fellowship meets at 10 a.m., in **Ingersoll**, Ont. Speakers: Lesley Bell and Denise Jennings, both from the St. Thomas Psychiatric Hospital, and Rev. John De Vries. Pre-registration of \$7 required. Info.: (905) 639-1075 or (519) 246-9993.
- Oct. 25 Community concert by organist Jonathan Oldengarm, 7:30 p.m., Benton St. Baptist Church, **Kitchener**, Ont.
- Nov. 7 Christian Festival Concert by the 100-voice choir and concert band of the Ont. Chr. Music Assembly, with special guests from Europe, under the direction of Leendert Kooij. At 8 p.m., Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto**, Ont. For tickets/info, call (416) 636-9777 (#).

News

Christian woman forms pituitary tumor network in Canada

Pituitary patients face numerous unseen problems

Gertie Pool

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. — Thirty-four-year-old Michel White, national director of The Pituitary Tumor Network Association of Canada, and chairperson of the B.C. chapter, solely began organizing a much needed Pituitary Tumor Network Association of Canada only one year ago.

The pituitary gland, often called the body's "master gland," regulates many other glands to ensure proper body functioning. What is certain is that those afflicted with pituitary tumor problems struggle with dramatic life changes and disorders, often for the duration of their lives.

"The failure of so many pituitary patients to readjust to family, social and work relationships after surgery and medical care is alarming," says White. "Whereas many patients with other chronic, life-threatening or life-altering illnesses have an inner tool kit available to help them cope, adjust and repair the emotional and psychological damages, when the body's master gland is thrown off balance, the pituitary tumor patient has a hand grenade thrown in their survival kit."

All better now

White, herself a patient, was 21 when she discovered a tumor in her pituitary gland which required surgery, and after a regrowth of the tumor, radiation. "I became a totally different person after that," she acknowledges. "Worst of all I couldn't understand what was going on in my body. I didn't even understand where the pituitary was, or what it did. I tried hard to find another person with the same problem, but couldn't find anyone."

"The endocrinologist who did my surgery said, 'We've removed the tumor so you're all better now.' But that simply isn't so! Everyday-problems for pituitary patients are much bigger than most people realize. We need medications to live on and make our bodies function the way others do normally. It can be very tricky to balance the medications. You have to take



Michel White

one day at a time."

A harsh fact is that pituitary tumor patients' problems often mushroom into social issues which involve their relationships, physical intimacy, and emotions. Their illness may also effect them economically. And such issues may gradually rub on families until family members can't deal with it anymore.

"Very often patients cannot control their emotional problems. Unreasonable outbursts come suddenly and without reason. I don't know what brings them on, or how to stop it" says White. "Thankfully, I have a husband who accepts it and tries to understand; and a daughter who doesn't really understand but still accepts it. Unfortunately many families fall apart because they cannot cope with the stressful situations. The doctor's 'quick fix' for these emotional problems is, 'We have a drug you can take that will help.' I don't want a drug, I want to know what is causing these problems."

White says that research and technological knowledge regarding tumors of the pituitary gland have increased dramatically since she had her surgery 12 years ago. "Today there are medications that will shrink tumors," she adds, "so quite often patients don't require surgery like they used to. Unfortunately, due to lack of awareness, there is little funding available for extensive research."

Once White began to understand the magnitude of her

problems and her replacement drug therapy, she forged ahead trying to find ways to help others. But it wasn't easy. Since there were few written materials, and what she found was outdated, Michel crossed the border and joined the four-year-old Pituitary Tumor Network Association (PTNA) in Los Angeles.

Cross-border network

The PTNA is one of the fastest growing medical foundations today for pituitary issues. Its first goal was to create clear concise, written information, for patients about various pituitary adenomas [glandular tumors] and the intricacies of diagnosis and treatment. It produced a 205-page, first-ever, *Pituitary Patient's Resource Guide*. The association also publishes a 12-page quarterly newsletter, "Network," which is read in nearly 70 countries by physicians and patients alike. With modern help through a website (<http://www.pituitary.com>), more and more health institutes, hospitals and private physicians now refer patients to the PTNA for mem-

bership, information and personal counselling.

"Due to the attitude that doctors have about pituitary issues not being very significant, this is one area [public awareness] that is very important right now," says White.

White established the Canadian PTNA under the umbrella of the U.S.-based Association in 1996. To date, two chapters have been formed in Canada, one in Vancouver and one in Toronto. Membership is 100 and growing.

Make the best of each day

The B.C. chapter meets monthly in Vancouver, and is planning to have speakers come in, starting in September. The association, both American and Canadian, plans to make November 1 the first "Pituitary Awareness Day," with a major campaign and extensive coverage.

"Patient participation with the PTNA and local chapter can lead to better self-management and control over the direction of the pituitary patient's quality of life, as well as a place to obtain information and talk to others who understand," says Michel White. "For me, all I want to do is get on with my life, make the best of each day, and try to help others with pituitary problems. That's why starting the PTNA of Canada was so important to me."

Even though Michel and her husband, Jim, are devoted Christians, life can be most frustrating for both of them at times. "But if my experience promotes me to become a tool in the Master's hand, to help others achieve a better quality of life, I believe my life is worth fighting for," Michel concludes.

Anyone wishing more information may contact Michel White at phone and fax: (604) 850-1341; or by e-mail at: bubble@uniserve.com.

Thinkbit

My daddy had a saying, "We all share and share alike. Rich man has all the ice he wants in summer. Poor man has all the ice he wants in winter."

Source unknown

News Digest

80 years of teaching

WATERDOWN, Ont. (CP)

— At 101 years old, a Canadian nun has just completed 80 years as a School Sister of Notre Dame. Sister Mary Hartlieb, one of nine children born on a farm near Stratford, Ont., went to Milwaukee to join the order in 1917.

Later, Hartlieb returned to Canada and graduated from Queen's University and taught in Ontario schools and at Notre Dame Academy, now the order's "motherhouse," where she lives, in Waterdown, Ont. (near Hamilton).

No privacy?

SANTA PAULA, Calif. (EP) — A student who was expelled from a Roman Catholic university for sleeping with her fiance is suing the school for invasion of privacy and civil rights violations. Aliya Peerzada, 23, is seeking damages, legal fees and an injunction to prevent Thomas Aquinas College from enforcing its rules of student conduct, which are based on the church's doctrines.

Wahoo is a yahoo

CLEVELAND, Ohio (EP) — The Cleveland Indians' mascot Chief Wahoo will be dropped from Ohio beer ads by Anheuser-Busch and banned from employee uniforms in Denny's Restaurants in Ohio because of pressure brought by the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. The New York-based network represents 275 religious institutional investors with combined assets of \$70 billion. It says Chief Wahoo is a racist symbol. Similar criticisms led to the retirement of such corporate logos as Little Black Sambo.

AIDS deaths decrease

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — The death rate for U.S. AIDS patients dropped last year, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). In the first nine months of 1996, 30,700 people died from AIDS, down 19 per cent from the same period in 1995. CDC specialists said the AIDS epidemic is slowing because people in high-risk groups, such as homosexuals and intravenous drug users, are taking steps to avoid infection. Therapy with protease inhibitors has also slowed the death rate.